

REMARKS

This communication is a Preliminary Amendment and a full and timely response to the final Office Action dated February 10, 2005 (Paper No./Mail Date 02082005) the period for response being extended through a Request for One-Month Extension of Time submitted herewith. Moreover, this communication is submitted concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination. By this communication, claims 1 and 4 have been amended and claims 10 and 11 have been added.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite front display means disposed in front of the variable display means, said front display means including a liquid crystal display panel having transparent areas that ensure the visibility of the variable display means, wherein said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said transparent areas, and a light guiding plate that guides light emitted from a light source across a surface of said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the light guiding plate includes transparent areas that ensure the visibility of the variable display of said variable display means are individually formed corresponding to said plurality of rows. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 1 can be found variously throughout the specification, for example, at paragraph [0046] of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claim 4 has been amended to recite a front display device disposed in front of the variable display device, said front display device includes a transparent liquid crystal display panel having at least a first transparent area that ensures the visibility of the variable display device, wherein said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said first transparent area, at least one light source for emitting light to said transparent liquid crystal display panel, and a light guiding plate for guiding light emitted from said light source across a surface of said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the light guiding plate has at least one second transparent area that ensures the visibility of the variable display of said variable display device are formed corresponding to said first transparent area. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 4 can be found variously throughout the specification, for example, at paragraph [0046] of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claim 10 depends from claim 4 and additionally recites a reflection plate disposed between said variable display device and said light guiding plate, for reflecting a light emitted from said light source on said light guiding plate, to said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the

reflection plate has at least one third transparent area which ensure the visibility of the variable display of said variable display device, corresponding to said first transparent area and second transparent area. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 10 is found variously throughout the specification, for example, at paragraph [0022] of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claim 11 depends from claim 4 and additionally recites at least one other light source disposed at a side of said reflection plate that opposes the variable display device. Support for the subject matter recited in claim 11 can be found variously throughout the specification, for example, at paragraph [0022] of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-11 are pending where claims 1 and 4 are independent.

Objection to the Claims

Claim 4 was objected to for a typographical error. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendment to claim 4 addresses and remedies the alleged deficiency. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claim 4 be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over *Ozaki et al.*, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001-0031658 in view of *Tokunaga*, U.S. Patent No. 5,375,043. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 recites gaming machine comprising variable display means for variably displaying designs in a plurality of rows; and front display means disposed in front of the variable display means, said front display means including a liquid crystal display panel having transparent areas that ensure the visibility of the variable display means, wherein said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said transparent areas, and a light guiding plate that guides light emitted from a light source across a surface of said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the light guiding plate includes transparent areas that ensure the visibility of the variable display of said variable display means are individually formed corresponding to said plurality of rows.

Claim 4 recites a gaming machine comprising variable display device that variably displays designs in a plurality of rows; and a front display device disposed in front of the variable display device, said front display device includes a transparent liquid crystal display

panel having at least a first transparent area that ensures the visibility of the variable display device, wherein said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said first transparent area, at least one light source for emitting light to said transparent liquid crystal display panel, and a light guiding plate for guiding light emitted from said light source across a surface of said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the light guiding plate has at least one second transparent area that ensures the visibility of the variable display of said variable display device are formed corresponding to said first transparent area.

Ozaki discloses a gaming machine having a main frame 14 that is divided into a top section 14a, a middle section 14b, and a bottom section 14c. The middle section 14b has a square opening 24 in which a front panel 26 is fitted. Transparent EL panels 28a, 28b, and 28c are stacked behind the back face of the front panel 26 and constitute a front panel display. An intermediate panel 27 is behind the transparent EL panels 28a, 28b, and 28c. An EL display control 50g displays overlapping patterns and gaming information on the transparent EL panels 28a, 28b, and 28c based on display data. The overlapping patterns vary according to the state of the game and are triggered by certain game events. The Office Action acknowledges that *Ozaki* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest backlighting that is used to illuminate the liquid crystal display. In addition, Applicant submits that *Ozaki* also fails to disclose, teach, or suggest that said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said transparent areas. The Office Action relies on *Tokunaga* to remedy this deficiency.

Tokunaga discloses a lighting unit wherein a liquid crystal display is disposed on top of a light guide plate 1 so that the content of the liquid crystal display is irradiated with light emitted from the light guide plate 1. However, *Tokunaga* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest at least that said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said transparent areas.

In summary, *Ozaki* and *Tokunaga* either singly or combined fail to disclose, teach, or suggest at least that said liquid crystal display panel displays images other than said designs in a display area other than said transparent areas. At best, the combined references disclose a gaming machine having an EL display device that displays a variety of overlapped gaming symbols and other gaming information in the transparent area of the EL display device. Accordingly, a *prima facie* case for obviousness has not been established.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA

1974). Moreover, obviousness "cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching or suggestion supporting the combination." *ACS Hosp. Sys. V. Montefiore Hosp.*, 732 F.2d 1572, 1577, 221 USPQ 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984). For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1 and 4 be withdrawn, and these claims be allowed.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and claims 5-8 depend from claim 4. By virtue of this dependency, Applicant submits that claims 2, 3, and 5-8 are allowable for at least the same reasons given above with regard to their respective base claim. In addition, Applicant submits that claims 2, 3, and 5-8 are further distinguished over *Ozaki* and *Tokunaga* by the additional elements recited therein, and particularly with respect to each claimed combination. Applicant respectfully requests, therefore, that the rejection of claims 2, 3, and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn, and these claims be allowed.

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over *Ozaki* in view of *Tokunaga* and further in view of *Mott*, U.S. Patent No. 4,756,414. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 9 depends from claim 4. By virtue of this dependency, Applicant submits that claim 9 is allowable for at least the same reasons given above with regard to claim 4. In addition, Applicant submits that claim 9 is further distinguished over *Ozaki*, *Tokunaga*, and *Mott* by the additional elements recited therein, and particularly with respect to each claimed combination. Applicant respectfully requests, therefore, that the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn, and this claim be allowed.

Newly Added Claims

Claim 10 depends from claim 4 and additionally recites a reflection plate disposed between said variable display device and said light guiding plate, for reflecting a light emitted from said light source on said light guiding plate, to said liquid crystal display panel; wherein the reflection plate has at least one third transparent area which ensure the visibility of the variable display of said variable display device, corresponding to said first transparent area and second transparent area. By virtue of this dependency, Applicant submits that claim 10 is allowable for at least the same reasons given above with respect to claim 4. Applicant respectfully requests that claim 10 be considered and allowed.

Claim 11 depends from claim 4 and additionally recites at least one other light source disposed at a side of said reflection plate that opposes the variable display device. By virtue of this dependency, Applicant submits that claim 11 is allowable for at least the same reasons given above with respect to claim 4. Applicant respectfully requests that claim 10 be considered and allowed.

Conclusion

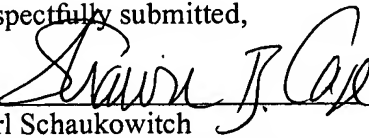
Based on at least the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-11 are allowable, and this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request favorable reexamination and reconsideration of the application. In the event the Examiner has any comments or suggestions for placing the application in even better form, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. SHO-0044 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: June 10, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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